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THE MINOR DRAMA.

The Acting Edition.

No. CLVIII.

THE VILLAGE LAWYER.

A Farce,

IN TWO ACTS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A description of the Costume—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—
Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the
Stage Business.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

PRINCIPAL ENGLISH AND AMERICAN THEATRES.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
122 NASSAU STREET, (UP STAIRS.)

CAST OF THE CHARACTERS.—[THE VILLAGE LAWYER.]

	<i>Haymarket, London, 1826.</i>	<i>Philadelphia.</i>	<i>Laura Keene's, N. Y., 1858.</i>
<i>Scout</i>	Mr. J. Reeve.	Mr. Jefferson.	Mr. Jefferson.
<i>Snarl</i>	Mr. Williams.	Mr. Francis.	Mr. Burnett.
<i>Charles</i>	Mr. Cooke.	Mr. Baker.	Mr. Duncombe.
<i>Mittimus</i>	Mr. Lee.	Mr. Hathwell.	Mr. Burke.
<i>Countryman</i> . . .		Mr. Parker.	
<i>1st Constable</i> . . .		Mr. Murray.	
<i>2d Constable</i> . . .		Mr. Martin.	
<i>Sheepface</i>	Mr. Wilkinson.	Mr. Blisset.	Mr. Peters.
<i>Kate</i>	Miss Wood.	Mrs. Bloxten.	Miss Mary Wells.
<i>Mrs. Scout</i>	Mrs. Kendall.	Mrs. Francis.	Miss Bishop.

THE VILLAGE LAWYER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Rural Prospect with house painted on R H., with practicable door.*

Enter SCOUT and MRS. SCOUT, from house.

Scout. Nay, nay, good wife, not so loud, or I vanish. Five and twenty years have I exposed my organs of hearing (ay, and though I say it without whining too,) to the encounter of the toughest lungs in Westminster Hall, with no worse effect as yet, than a modreate deafness of the left ear, and a whizzing from time to time in the right, but that dear lovely indefatigable tongue of thine so far out-dins the bar itself, that though a lawyer——

Mrs. S. A lawyer! why in that trim, you look more like a client than a lawyer; and no one to see you in such a dress, would imagine you had ever carried on a suit in any one's name but your own. Out upon you! you are a disgrace to the profession, and had you a grain of spirit——

Scout. Spirit! oh, there at least you wrong me, and I defy any practitioner of twice my standing to produce more instances of spirit than I have; who exposes himself to the displeasure of the judges, or the censure of the courts. Show me the man that sets the pedantic regulations of common practice more at defiance than I have done; haven't I been obliged to quit the London courts only for displaying too much spirit on a certain occasion?

Mrs. S. Very fine truly! and do you boast of your blunders, and make a merit of your disgrace?

Scout. This accident to be sure, forces me to try my talents in the obscurity of rural practice; and yet, since our removal to this village, though next door to Justice Mittimus, the best accustomed magistrate in the whole country, no favorable opportunity has offered; not a hare has been snared, or a head broke, or (what a stranger still) a single bastard born, though we have been here a whole fort-

night, nay, the very cattle keep out of pound, to spite me. But come, have a little patience, times will mend.

Mrs. S. And in the meantime, your wife is to starve, and your daughter to lose the opportunity of settling herself in the world, by a match with one or other of the young men who court her, and whom the poverty of your appearance frighten away.

Scout. Why, to say the truth, there is nothing in my dress that can bring either lovers to my daughter, or clients to myself. Mankind is governed by show, and the surest way to obtain the countenance of the world is never to appear to want it. Could I but once put on the appearance of business, the reality perhaps would soon follow, let me see—couldn't I—yes, I have it, I'll go and purchase me a handsome suit of clothes immediately.

Mrs. S. A handsome suit of clothes! what, without a farthing in your pocket?

Scout. Why not? in London all your handsome suits are purchased the same way. What color shall I choose? bat's-wing—or——

Mrs. S. Oh, no matter for the color, if you can find any one kind enough to trust you with the clothes.

Scout. Then to lose no time, I'll step over the way to the rich draper's, my neighbor Snarl's.

Mrs. S. To neighbor Snarl's! have a care what you do there. You know his son Charles is in love with our Harriet, and would have married her before now, but for fear of his father; I would not for the world you should do anything to overthrow my daughter's hope.

Scout. Never fear. Step in and fetch my hat and gown. [*Exit Mrs. S., into house.*] I have just time to slip it on; it will give me a more creditable appearance before old Snarl, and these rags of mine into the bargain.

Enter Mrs. Scout, with gown and hat.

Ay, this will do. How many sleek, spruce, demure-looking gowns are there in the world, as well as this; good for nothing else, but covering things not fit to be seen. [*Exeunt, L. H.*]

SCENE II.—*Snarl's shop, door in c., desk, day book, pen and ink, stools—chairs, cloth on counter.*

Enter SNARL and CHARLES, T. H., rough door.

Snarl. Well, son, I ordered you to inquire me out a shepherd instead of that dog Sheepface; didn't I?

Char. Why, surely, father, you have no fault to find with Sheepface.

Snarl. No; only that he is a thief! an arrant thief!

Char. I always found Sheepface a very faithful servant.

Snarl. To you he may, but not to me; he has been but a month in my service, and there are fourteen of my wethers missing; now it is impossible so great a number in so short a time could die of the rot as he says.

Char. You don't consider what a havoc a disorder sometimes makes.

Snarl. With the help of a doctor, I grant you, but my sheep had no doctor, poor things! yet they could not have made more haste if they had been prescribed for by the whole faculty. As for that dog, Sheepface, I have suspected him for some time; but last night I caught him in the act, and this morning I mean to bring him before Justice Mittimus; but first of all, I must know exactly what's my loss. Reach me the account of the flock. [*Sits down.*] And if neighbor Gripe, the constable, inquires for me, send him this way.

Enter SHEEPFACE, T. H., rough door.

Char. [*Aside to SHEEPFACE.*] Sheepface, all's out, I find, father's confoundedly angry, try what you can do to soften it, but beware of speaking. *Exit, L. H.*

Snarl. Let me see: "Bought of farmer Clod."

Sheep. Save your good worship, sweet master Snarl.

Snarl. How, villian, have you the impudence to appear in my sight, after the tricks you have played me?

Sheep. Only to tell your worship, that neighbor Gripe has been talking to me about sheep-stealing, and Justice Mittimus, and your worship, and a power of things, and so I said I wouldn't make a secret of it to my good master's worship any longer.

Snarl. Your affected innocence sha'n't save you, you rascal; didn't I catch you last night killing one of the fattest of my wethers.

Sheep. Only to keep it from dying.

Snarl. Kill it to keep it from dying!

Sheep. Of the rot, and please your worship, it's a secret I learn from the doctor in our town. He cured most of his patients the same way.

Snarl. The doctor, rascal! the doctor has a license to kill from the college. Such sheep as mine, too, there was not in all England, such another breed for Spanish wool.

Sheep. Be satisfied your worship with the blows you gave me, and let's make up matters, if it's your worship's sweet will and pleasure.

Snarl. My will and pleasure is to hang you, rascal, to hang you.

Sheep. Consider, your worship, I was married but yesterday; leave me to myself, a week or two, and who knows but I may save you the trouble.

Snarl. No, rascal, the gallows is the quickest remedy of the two, and every bit as sure as t'other.

Sheep. Heaven give you good luck of it then, if it must be so, sweet master Snarl. I must go look for a lawyer, I see, or *might* will overcome *right*. Oh, dear, that an honest man should be treated so, only for killing a few sheep to save 'em from dying. [*Exit, R. H.*]

Snarl. [*Sitting down.*] A dog! but he shall pay for this. Let me see—two, and two are four—

Enter SCOUT, through door.

Scout. The coast is clear at last, now or never.

Snarl. And seven—no, nine—

Scout. [*Aside*] Yonder's a piece of cloth now would suit me to a hair. Give me leave, sir, to—

Snarl. Who's there? Gripe, I suppose. Wait a moment, honest Gripe.

Scout. I am lawyer Scout, your neighbor—I am come to—

Snarl. I am lawyer Scout my neighbor's very humble servant: but he and I have no business together, that I know of, "carried over"—

Scout. You'll have another story to tell to-morrow, or I'm much mistaken. [*Aside.*] I find, sir, upon looking over my late father's papers, an account of a debt left unpaid, and I am come—

Snarl. It's no business of mine; I owe no man a farthing.

Scout. I wish I could say as much for myself; but I find that my father was indebted to *yours* in a small balance of fifty pounds, and as a man of honor, I am come here to pay it to you.

Snarl. [*Rising.*] My dear sir, ten thousand pardons for my forgetfulness. I recollect you perfectly now. Yes, you lived in the next village and you and I were sworn comrades formerly. Pray, sir, be seated. [*Hands a chair.*]

Scout. Dear, sir, if those who are indebted to me, had a little of my punctuality, I should be a richer man than I am; but to have my name in any one's book is a thing I can't bear.

Snarl. And yet the generality of people bear it very patiently.

Scout. I am upon thorns in a manner, while I owe one a farthing, and for that reason I am come to know when you'll be at leisure to receive the money.

Snarl. No time like the present.

Scout. True, I have it at home, ready told; but as I have the management of my father's effects, only as a guardian for my daughter Harriet, it's proper that the other guardians should be by at the payment.

Snarl. Very true, sir, then what do you think of to-morrow at three o'clock.

Scout. With all my heart, but I have interrupted you, perhaps. [*Rises.*] Why, sir, you do more business than all the shopkeepers in this part of the country put together.

Snarl. I can't complain.

Scout. No, you have such a way with you, that those who buy once, can't for the blood of them, help coming to you again. A pretty bit of cloth, this—

Snarl. Very pretty.

Scout. One meets in your shop such a generosity of treatment, a politeness of behavior, that it makes it pleasanter to *pay* money to you than to receive it elsewhere. The wool seems tolerable fine.

Snarl. Right Spanish wool, every hair of it, sir.

Scout. So I thought; now we talk of Spanish wool, if I am not mistaken. Mr. Snarl, you and I went to school together formerly.

Snarl. What, to old Ironlist?

Scout. The same; you were a very handsome youth, I remember.

Snarl. So my mother always said.

Scout. Égad, for old acquaintance sake, you and I must eat a bit of dinner together to day. I have a fine goose at home, that a client sent me from Norfolk.

Snarl. Goose! that's my favorite dish.

Scout. And my wife shall dress it by a family receipt. It's a treasure, that recipe's a perfect treasure. Her uncle, the late Alderman Dimpling, passed through the whole circle of corporation honors, and died mayor by virtue of that receipt.

Snarl. Ay, ay!

Scout. Then Mrs. Scout will be happy to see you; now I think on't, I promised her that you should have my custom for the future, and to make a beginning I don't care if I have the pattern of a suit of clothes from you now.

Snarl. Very happy to accommodate you, sir; what color would you choose.

Scout. Color? Why here's a pretty one enough, to my mind, sir.

Snarl. Very pretty indeed, sir; it's an iron-gray. Shall I cut off the quantity you want, to have it ready?

Scout. To have it ready! no, Mr. Snarl, pay as you go, that's my rule; pay as you go.

Snarl. Ecod, an excellent rule it is.

Scout. Do you remember, Mr. Snarl, the evening we were together at the goose and gridiron?

Snarl. What, the evening I so roasted our curate?

Scout. The same; you were very severe on him. You had a world of it. Pray, what must I pay you a yard for this cloth?

Snarl. Why, sir, another should pay me nineteen and sixpence; but come, you shall have it at nineteen shillings—now I think of it, here's your quantity ready cut.

Scout. Ready cut, that's lucky, indeed.

[*Snatches up the cloth.*]

Snarl. Stop a moment, till I measure it before you.

Scout. Oh, fie, do you think I have any doubt of you?

Snarl. But the price—

Scout. Pooh, I never haggle with a friend; I leave all that to you. Good-day.

Snarl. Let my shopman carry it over, and brink back—

Scout. No, no, don't take him from business. It is but a step, you know, and I'll carry it twice as far to oblige you. Compliments to Mrs. Snarl; good-bye to you, good-bye.

[*Exit, SNARL follows through door.*]

SCENE III.—*Scout's house.*

Enter KATE and SHEEPFACE. L. H.

Kate. Lookye, if you want a lawyer to bring you out of a scrape, my master's the man for your money.

Sheep. I know it, he stood my friend once when brother and I were put to trouble; would you believe it, only for mending the complexion of a bald face horse; but I have such a treacherous memory, I don't know how it came about, but somehow or other I forgot to pay him.

Kate. He'll not think of that, perhaps; at any rate take care not to

tell him who the plaintiff is ; for I know he would not on any account be concerned against Mr. Snarl.

Sheep. I'll only tell him of my master, without mentioning any name ; and he'll think I mean the farmer I lived with, when I courted you first.

Kate. Do so, here he comes.

[*Exit, R. H.*

Enter SCOUT.

Scout. Sure I should know that face, I think—yes, the same. Harkye, didn't I save you and your brother from being hanged some time since at York.

Sheep. Yes, your worship. yes.

Scout. By the same token one of you forgot to pay me.

Sheep. Yes, that was brother.

Scout. The other was sick at the trial, and died some time after in prison.

Sheep. That was not I.

Scout. So I see.

Sheep. For all that I was sicker nor brother ! and so as I was saying, I am come to beg of your worship to speak for me before the justice against his worship, my master.

Scout. What, the great farmer in the neighborhood ?

Sheep. He lives in the neighborhood sure enough, and your worship shall be paid to your heart's content.

Scout. Let me hear your case, and be sure you tell it without disguise.

Sheep. You must know then, and please your worship, my master give me but little wages, very small wages, indeed : and so, to make amends for that, without doing him any damage, I thought as how I'd best do a little business on my own account with a worthy neighbor, a butcher by trade.

Scout. And what kind of business do you carry on ?

Sheep. Under favor, I hinder sheep from dying of the rot.

Scout. There's no harm in that : how do you contrive—

Sheep. Please your worship, I cut their throats before they have time to catch it.

Scout. A very effectual remedy truly ; and your master perhaps, is unreasonable enough to say you do so only to sell the carcasses, and keep the money to yourself.

Sheep. Yes, your worship, and I can't beat it out of his head, because last night he saw me—I mean—I—must I tell the truth ?

Scout. Yes, tell the truth here, or how shall we be able to lie to any purpose elsewhere.

Sheep. The truth of the matter then is, that last night after I was married, having a little leisure time upon my hands, I took a walk as far as our pens, and there, as I was musing on, I don't know what, I takes my knife, and so happening by mere accident to put it, crav'ing your worship's pardon, under the throat of a fat wether. I don't know how it came about, but it was not long before the wether died all of a sudden as a body may say.

Scout. And there was somebody looking on the whole time, eh ?

Sheep. Yes, master, from behind the hedge, and so he will have it that fourteen wethers, which I saved from catching the rot, died all along of me. And so, as your worship may see, he laid such a shower of blows upon me as put the bride out of temper the whole night; but I hope your worship will stand my friend, and not let me lose the fruits of my honest industry all at once.

Scout. I understand you; there are two ways of proceeding in this affair; the first won't put you to a farthing of expense.

Sheep. Let's try that by all means.

Scout. With all my heart; you have scraped up something handsome in the course of your practice on your master's sheep.

Sheep. Heaven knows I have been up late and early for it.

Scout. Your savings are all in hard cash, I suppose.

Sheep. Yes, your worship.

Scout. You must hide the whole sum immediately in the safest place you can think of.

Sheep. That I will, without fail.

Scout. Your master will be obliged to pay all costs and charges.

Sheep. So he ought; he can afford it.

Scout. And without a penny out of your pocket.

Sheep. Just as I would have it.

Scout. He'll be put to the trouble of having you hanged.

Sheep. Zounds, let's try the other way first.

Scout. Well, then, you are to be brought before Justice Mittimus.

Sheep. So I am told.

Scout. Take no notice of this.

Sheep. Never fear me.

Scout. To every question asked you, either by court, the plaintiff, lawyer, or myself, make no reply but in the language of your own *cows* when they call their lambs; you can speak that language, can't you.

Sheep. It's my mother tongue.

Scout. The blows you have received on your head, have suggested a scheme, which, assisted by Mittimus's credulity may perhaps save you; but I expect to be well paid.

Sheep. That you shall, as I am an honest man; good-day your worship. Lord, Lord! what troubles we poor folks have to keep our own in this world. Your servant, your worship: I shall remember. Baa, baa baa.

[*Exit, L. II*]

Scout. So, if the contrivance I have thought of to elude my neighbor's demand, does not succeed; the money I get from this new client may stop his mouth, perhaps.

[*Exit, R. H.*]

A C T II.

SCENE I.—*A Rural Prospect, same as Act I. Scene I.**Enter SNARL, L. H.*

Snarl. This is a very busy day with me. I am to receive different sums of money from my worthy neighbor, Lawyer Scout, and to eat a goose with him, dressed after a receipt of the late worshipful Alderman Dumpling. Well, I always said the aldermen were a useful body of men. But suppose I call in to see how matters stand, by way of asking how he does; here's a savory smell. Egad! they have put down the goose already. I'll go and have a sop in the pan.

*[Exit, into house.]*SCENE II.—*A Room in Scout's House. Scout's gown and wig lying on table; chairs. &c.**Enter SCOUT and MRS. SCOUT, R. H.*

Scout. Quick, quick! old Snarl is coming up—I hear him on the stairs. Now mind your cue, wife.

Mrs. S. Never fear me; I'll be a good nurse, I warrant me.

Enter SNARL, L. H.

Scout. *[In a chair, as sick.]* Wi-f-e, here's the apo-the-cary.

Snarl. The apothecary!

Scout. He brings me the cooling mixture.

Snarl. The cooling mixture.

Mrs. S. Oh, dear sir! I hope you have brought something to give my poor husband a little ease. He has been in the condition you see this fortnight past.

Snarl. This fortnight, woman! why——

Mrs. S. Yes, this day fortnight, of all the good days in the year, he was taken with a lunacy fit, and has not been out of the room since.

Snarl. Zounds! not out of the room! Why he came to my house this morning; by the same token he bought four yards of my iron-gray cloth of me, and I come for the money. Good morrow, Mr. Scout.

Scout. Good morrow, geod Mr. Drench.

Snarl. Mr. Drench!

Mrs. S. He takes you for the apothecary, sir. Pray leave the room, for heaven's sake, if you can give him no relief.

Snarl. But patience. You remember, Mr. Scout, this morning——

Scout. Yes; this morning, I bid my wife lay by for you——

Snarl. Ay, I knew he would remember it.

Scout. I bid her lay by for you, earefully, a large glass-full of my——

Snarl. A glass-full! I am come for my money. Zounds! is that the coin I am to be paid in?

Mrs. S. Dear sir, retire.

Snarl. When I am paid, and not before.

Scout. I beseech you let me have no more of those odious pills ; they had like to have made me give up the ghost.

Snarl. I wish they had made you give up my cloth.

Scout. [*Rising.*] Wife, see, see! three large buzzing butterflies, with amber heads, and crystal wings! There they go! there! Tally oh! hoics, hoics! tally oh! ho! ho!

Snarl. I see none of them.

Mrs. S. But you see he raves.

Scout. [*Falling back in chair.*] Save me, good folks, from the doctor, and a fig for the disease!

Snarl. Oh, he talks good sense how. Now I'll speak to him. Neighbor Scout.

Scout. [*Jumping up.*] My client! my lord! Sir Hugh Witherington!

Snarl. Sir Hugh Witherington!

Scout. Charges the defendant, Sir Hugh Montgomery——

Snarl. Gomery! Why, it is possible I could have mistaken another for him.

Mrs. S. Nay, now you have tormented the poor man sufficiently ; let him have a little rest.

Snarl. Stay ; he looks as if he would speak to me.

Scout. Oh, dear Mr. Snarl!

Snarl. He knows me! I said so.

Scout. I beg ten thousand pardons——

Snarl. No apologies—well——

Scout. That since my arrival in this village, I haven't been to see you.

Snarl. Not been to see me! Why, this very day, you know——

Scout. Yes ; to-day, to make my excuses, I sent an attorney of my acquaintance.

Snarl. An attorney! Eh! shall I never see my cloth again? But it's all a sham ; you yourself was the very person. By the same token your father owed mine fifty pounds. Ay, ay, you may shake your head, but I sha'n't quit the place without either my cloth or my money.

Scout. This won't do, I find ; I must try another method. [*Aside.*] Wife, wife! don't you hear them? The thieves are breaking in at the door ; but I'll bite 'em this way. Here they come! My musket! I'll shoot 'em! Stop thief! [*Collars SNARL.*] My musket! my musket!

[*Exit, R. II.*]

Snarl. A thief! my musket! Ecod, it may be dangerous to argue with a madman and a blunderbuss.

Re-enter SCOUT, R. II., with a birch-broom, which he levels at SNARL, who, supposing it a musket, scrambles off, L. II., crying out:

Oh Lord! Oh dear!

Scout. Ha, ha, ha! He's gone at last.

Mrs. S. Yes, yes, he's gone. You have no further occasion for me ; but stay you here for fear of his return. [*Exit, R. II.*]

Scout. So I have got a reprieve for some time at least. Here he comes again. Stop thief! stop thief! stop thief! Oh! it's my new client.

Enter SHEEPFACE, L. H.

Sheep. At your worship's service ; Justice Mittimus is ready, and the court will sit immediately.

Scout. Wait till I put on my gown, and be sure you remember the instructions I gave you.

Sheep. Never fear, your worship. Baa ! Practice makes perfect, they say.

Scout. This way ; we have no time to lose.

Sheep. I have been improving myself this half-hour past, in our pens, and now I am so fluent in talking like a sheep, that I question if his worship and the whole bench together could beat me at it. Baa !
baa ! [*Exeunt. L. H.*]

SCENE III.—*The Court at the Justice's. Table and five chairs.*

MITTIMUS *discovered* ; two JUSTICES, R. H., and SNARL *discovered*, L. H.

Mit. Well, the court is assembled, and the parties may appear. Where is your lawyer, neighbor Snarl ?

Snarl. I am my own lawyer.

Enter SCOUT, SHEEPFACE, and CONSTABLES, L. H.

Scout. [*Aside to SHEEPFACE.*] How, rascal, you have imposed upon me. Is that the plaintiff ?

Sheep. Yes, that's his worship, my good master.

Scout. [*Aside.*] How shall I get out of this scrape ? If I go off, it will rouse his suspicions. I'll e'en stay, and outface him.

Snarl. [*Seeing SCOUT.*] Hey-day ! who have we here ? The very fellow, as I live.

Mit. Neighbor Snarl, you are the plaintiff ; begin.

Snarl. Then you must know, that this thief——

Mit. Come, come, no abuse.

Snarl. The short and the long of it then is, that this scoundrel, shepherd of mine that was, has robbed me of fourteen wethers.

Scout. That remains to be proved.

Snarl [*Aside.*] His voice, by Jupiter !

Mit. What proof have you ?

Snarl. Proof—why I—I sold them this morning—no, I don't mean that—I gave him in charge four yards—no, I don't mean that—four-score sheep, I should say, and there are but threescore and six forthcoming.

Scout. I deny the fact.

Snarl. Well, if I had not left the other in a lunacy fit, I should swear this was the very man.

Mit. This is the very man, without doubt ; but that is not the point, at present. The fact, neighbor Snarl, prove the fact.

Snarl. I prove it by my oath—I mean by the count of my flock. What's become of the four yards—fourteen sheep, I should say—that are missing ?

Scout. They are dead of the rot.

Snarl. Zounds ! 'tis he himself.

Mit. Again, why I tell you once more, neighbor, nobody doubts

that. It is asserted that your sheep died of the rot. What do you answer to that?

Snarl. I answer that it is a confounded lie, and the proof on't is. I was hiding behind the hedge, when who should come up but this fellow, and laying hold of one of the fattest of my wethers, sits down beside me, and after cajoling me for awhile about Witherington, Gomery, he makes no more ado, but carries off four yards of it.

Mit. Four yards of your wethers?

Snarl. Eh! no—my cloth—I say my cloth—the other—

Mit. What other, neighbor, what other?

Scout. Dear sir, he's mad, raving mad.

Mit. I fear so. Harkye, neighbor Snarl; not all the justices in the country—no, nor their clerks either—could make anything of your evidence. You talk of fourteen wethers stole from you, and you jumble up with that four yards of cloth, and Wittington, and I don't know what. Stick to your wethers, I say, or I must discharge the prisoner. But the shortest way is to examine him himself. Come here, my good fellow; hold up your head. What is your name?

Sheep. Baa!

Snarl. He lies; his name is Sheepface.

Mit. Well, Sheepface or Baa, no matter for the name. Tell me, is it true that Mr. Snarl gave you fourscore sheep in charge?

Sheep. Baa!

Mit. How? Oh! his fears get the better of him, perhaps. Come, come, don't be alarmed; did Mr. Snarl catch you at night killing one of his wethers?

Sheep. Baa!

Mit. Hey-day! what can this mean?

Scout. Why, sir, the blows the plaintiff gave the poor fellow on his head, have affected his brain, and put him, as your worship sees, beside himself. He's to be trepanned as soon as the court breaks up, and Mr. Mincemeat, the surgeon, says it is the whole materia medica to a dose of jalap that he never recovers.

Snarl. Oh! for the matter of that, it was a dark night; and whenever I strike, I always strike home, and when and where I can.

Scout. There, sir, he confesses the fact; a voluntary confession.

Mit. Ay, ay, a voluntary confession. Release the prisoner; I find no cause of complaint against him. [Exit CONSTABLES, L. II.]

Snarl. But I appeal. As to you, Mr. Irongray, we shall meet.

[To SCOUT.]

Mit. Oh fie, Mr. Snarl! you are much to blame.

Snarl. To blame, quotha! One runs off with my cloth; the other cuts the throats of my wethers; one pays me with Gomery, and the other with baa; yet, after all, I am to blame! As for you, Mr. Justice, I'll appeal to a higher court, and that you shall find, Mr. Wiseacre. [Exit, L. II.]

Scout. [To SHEEPFACE.] Go thank his worship, go.

Sheep. Baa, baa!

Mit. Enough, enough. Poor fellow! go and be trepanned directly; go. [Exit, R. II.]

Sheep. Baa!

Scout. Well, I have brought you off with flying colors, you see; and you are a man of your word, I know; and I am sure you will pay me generously, as you have promised me.

Sheep. Baa!

Scout. Yes, yes; you played your part very well, but that isn't the point now. My fee—do you see?—my fee.

Sheep. Baa!

Scout. What am I to be outwitted by a walking scrubbing post? a two-legged bull-wether? a——

Sheep. Baa!

Scout. So I am outdone here, I find. But come, will you assist in bringing about my daughter's marriage? If the scheme succeeds—if you and your wife, my maid Kate, play your parts well, I shall think myself sufficiently paid—if not, I'll show you what it is to attempt cheating a—lawyer. But to your hiding-place, scoundrel, do you hear?

Sheep. Baa, baa!

[*Exit, L. H.*]

Scout. The devil baa you. But come, his worship seems so persuaded of the fellow's dangerous situation, that it will be no hard matter to persuade him that he's at the point of death. But here he comes, and Kate along with him. The work's begun, I see; I must stay and lend a hand.

Enter MITTIMUS and KATE, R. H.

Mit. Poor fellow! Dead do you say, and so suddenly, too?

Kate. Yes—ye—es, sir. Oh, oh! oh dear! [*Crying.*]

Scout. Poor wench! An ugly affair this for Mr. Snarl.

Mit. Don't weep so, child; I'll see justice done you.

Kate. Oh, my husband! my poor dear husband! oh, oh, oh, oh!

Mit. Nay, be comforted; consider, you were married yesterday morning, and——

Kate. Ay, that's the reason; had he lived a day or two longer, it would have been some con-so-la-tion! Oh, oh, oh!

Mit. The murderer shall be punished; I have given the necessary orders already, and you will shortly have the comfort of seeing him hanged.

Scout. Hanged! Poor neighbor Snarl! So valuable a member of the community too. He'll be a public loss, neighbor Mittimus, a public loss.

Mit. True, he was a useful man in the country. But what can I do? here's a man murdered, and his widow demands justice.

Scout. But what service would it be to you, Kate, to have Mr. Snarl hanged? Would it not be better to——

Kate. Why, sir, I am not revengeful, and if there was any friendly way of making up matters, you know how I love your worship's god daughter.

Mit. My god-daughter! what concerns has she in this affair?

Kate. Why, an' please your worship, Charles, Mr. Snarl's only son is in love with Miss Harriet, your worship's god-daughter; but Mr. Snarl won't consent to the marriage. Now your worship is a man of learning, and if you set about it, I'm sure you might contrive something to please all parties.

Mit. I have it. We'll hush matters up on condition that Mr. Snarl consents to the match. But neighbor Scout, do you consent?

Scout. Why, I had no intention of marrying my daughter yet; but to save Mr. Snarl from being hanged, come, I consent.

Mit. They are bringing him this way, I see; leave us together.

Scout. I'll but just fill up the blanks of a *bond*, which you'll oblige him to sign; otherwise he might retract, you know.

[*Exit SCOUT and KATE, R. H.*]

Enter SNARL and CONSTABLES, L. H.

Mit. Well, neighbor Snarl, the poor wretch you beat they say is dead; and you confessed the fact, you know.

Snarl. I did; a blister on my tongue for it.

Mit. The law must take its course. But first let me know whether you would rather be hanged or consent to your son's wedding.

Snarl. Neither one nor t'other.

Mit. Lawyer Scout has a daughter—beautiful, and well-accomplished—and your son is in love with her.

Snarl. What's that to me?

Mit. Now matters might be hushed up if you consent to their marriage.

Snarl. I'll be hanged first.

Mit. Away with him to prison then.

Snarl. Hold, hold! I'll consent.

Enter SCOUT and CHARLES, L. H.

Scout. Here's a bond ready for signing; and Mr. Snarl, if any of my family can be of service to you in your present misfortune, you may command me.

Snarl. Eh, what! do you want another four yards of cloth, rascal? But come, give me this bond. There. [Signs it.]

Mit. Come, Charles, you and I will be witnesses. So you have had a fortunate escape, neighbor Snarl; I wish you joy of your good luck.

Snarl. Yes, this has been a lucky day for me, truly,

Enter two COUNTRYMEN, dragging in SHEEPFACE, L. H.

Coun. Bring him along.

Sheep. Mercy, good folks!

Mit. Whence comes this ghost?

Coun. Why, an't please your worship, we found this fellow hid under a heap of barley in our barn, so we brought him before your worship to make him give an account of himself.

Mit. What's become of the blows your master gave you on the head?

Sheep. Gone along with the fourteen wethers.

Snarl. What, rascal, you are not dead then?

Sheep. Baa!

Snarl. Let me come at him! I have paid for the killing, and it is but fair I should have the worth of my money; so, if I'm not allowed to choke him, I retract the consent I gave.

Scout. With all my heart; so you may pay the penalty of your bond, which is two thousand guineas.

Snarl. Two thousand devils! But come, joking apart, you'll pay me the fifty pounds your father owed mine?

Scout. Yes, when you can produce me his note.

Snarl. Mercy upon me! But then my four yards of cloth.

Scout. I'll wear them at your son's wedding.

Snarl. Well, at any rate, give me my share of the goose.

Scout. It flew back this morning to Norfolk.

Snarl. Then this rascal shall pay for all, and I'll begin by having him hanged.

Char. 'Tis time I own the truth, father. He has done nothing but by my direction, and to supply my necessities; therefore, suffer me to meet your future indulgence by the means of conquering all such temptations henceforward.

Snarl. Hem! well, it must be so then, I think; and, to prevent any future abuse, I'll sell off all my sheep, and then they'll neither die of the rot, nor shall I need a shepherd.

Scout. Well, so far have I succeed fully, both for myself and client; but a cause in which we are all interested, remains yet to be determined, which we must learn from the decision of this tribunal—whether the VILLAGE LAWYER is to be struck off the roll, or not.

THE END.

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